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TAGS: [EAIR](#) [ECON](#) [ETRD](#) [SENV](#) [FR](#)
SUBJECT: FRANCE: ICAO ASSEMBLY DEMARCHES ON KEY POSITIONS AND
ENVIRONMENT

REF A) STATE 77572 REF. B) STATE 83246

SUMMARY

¶1. (SBU) Econoff and FAA senior representative discussed reftel demarches June 28 with Jean-Michel Bour, head of the Office of International Affairs at the French Civil Aviation authority. Though key advisors on aviation and environment have not yet been officially appointed in the recently reorganized ministry of Ecology and Sustainable Development, we also provided the demarches to Michel Fremont, Chief of Staff to Minister Jean-Louis Borloo, and to Michel Wachenheim, who is expected to be named as the principal advisor to State Minister for Transportation Dominique Bussereau.

Safety/Security

¶2. (SBU) On U.S. positions regarding the Universal Safety Oversight Program (USOAP), and other positions on Safety Enhancement and Oversight, Bour said that he saw no major incompatibilities with French views. He was open to the possibility of co-sponsorship of a paper on USOAP, but thought that a regional approach would make more sense, and recommended that we approach ECAC about this. U.S. support for European papers, most of which had been completed and were being distributed by ECAC, would be a logical complement to this request he said. One area where France had reservations about U.S. views was on the publication of security audit information. France was "very, very reticent" about exchange of such information, he said.

¶3. (SBU) On reform more generally, a special meeting of ECAC in late August would adopt a common European position on reform of the Chicago Convention. Bour also noted that France agreed on the need for greater efficiency within ICAO, but felt that clear and detailed proposals were still lacking, for example on increased oversight in Africa. In what he characterized as a useful initiative, he said that ICAO President Kobeh planned to call a Ministerial on the eve of the General Assembly to help build political will for change. Minister of State for Transport Bussereau had been invited.

Environment

14. (SBU) As he has in past conversations, Bour made clear that he hoped the ICAO assembly would prove a step on the way to integrating aviation emissions into a post-Kyoto system. The EU's ETS system was already in motion, and would eventually have to include foreign airlines and international flights to maintain competitive balance. He rejected our view that this could only occur on the basis of "mutual agreement." He was intrigued however by the idea that some kind of recognized "equivalence" with systems that other regions might adopt independently could provide a way around this dilemma. If ICAO set broad objectives and defined the criteria for equivalence, other regions would be free to adopt their own regimes (as Australia was proposing to do). The EU could then recognize other regimes as equivalent to its own. How this would solve the practical issue of foreign airlines and international flights being subject to ETS, or respond to our objections that such a requirement is contrary to international law, was unclear from his response.

STAPLETON